

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6145

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 LONDON 15674

DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF, UR, US

SUBJECT: GEORGE BALL'S REMARKS ON MIDDLE EAST TO
ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION, NOVEMBER 28

1. IN THANKSGIVING DAY SPEECH TO ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION, GEORGE BALL TERMED MIDDLE EAST THE BEST POSSIBLE TEST OF DETENTE WITH THE SOVIET UNION. HE ADDED THAT "SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY" HAS HAD EFFECT OF SHUTTING OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS NOT ONLY THE MORE ACTIVIST ARABS BUT ALSO THE SOVIET UNION, YET HE SAID IT HAD BEEN APPARENT THAT THE HARD SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ARABS COULD BE RESOLVED ONLY IN A MULTILATERAL SETTING IN WHICH "SUBSTANTIALLY ALL" THE ARAB NATIONS, AND SOVIET UNION, WERE REPRESENTED.

2. BALL'S COMMENTS WERE REPORTED AT SOME LENGTH (AC-
CURATELY) BY DAVID SPANIER IN THE (LONDON) TIMES OF
NOVEMBER 29.

3. PERTINENT SECTION OF BALL'S TEXT AS FOLLOWS:

"I SHOULD PREFER, THEREFORE, THAT WE NOT CONFUSE

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OURSELVES BY SPECULATING AS TO WHETHER WE HAVE, IN FACT,

ESTABLISHED WITH MOSCOW ANYTHING RESEMBLING A REAL
DETENTE. (UNDERLINED) WHAT WE SHOULD SEEK, RATHER, IS TO
TEST WHETHER ANYTHING CONSTRUCTIVE CAN COME FROM OUR NEW
RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE BEST POSSIBLE
TEST IS LIKELY TO BE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IN THAT AREA,
AMERICA IS MAKING A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT PEACE
BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE ARAB NATIONS. WE HAVE TAKEN PRE-
LIMINARY STEPS TO AVOID THE IMMEDIATE DANGER OF A RESUMP-
TION OF HOSTILITIES. WE HAVE HELPED TO BRING ABOUT THE
SEPARATION OF FORCES--THE DISENGAGEMENT OF ARMIES--FIRST
ON THE EGYPTIAN AND THEN ON THE SYRIAN FRONT.

"THOSE NEGOTIATIONS WERE CONDUCTED BY THE AMERICAN
SECRETARY OF STATE THROUGH WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS
'SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY'--OR, IN OTHER WORDS, BY ACCOMMODA-
TIONS REACHED WITHIN A BILATERAL FRAMEWORK. THAT TECH-
NIQUE HAS HAD THE EFFECT OF SHUTTING OUT OF THE NEGOTIA-
TIONS NOT ONLY THE MORE ACTIVIST ARABS BUT ALSO THE
SOVIET UNION. YET IT HAS BEEN APPARENT FROM THE BEGIN-
NING THAT THE HARD SUBSTANTIVE PROBLEMS BETWEEN ISRAEL
AND ARABS--THE EMOTION-LADEN PROBLEM OF THE PALESTINIANS
AND THE WEST BANK, THE OBDURATE PROBLEM OF JERUSALEM--
COULD BE RESOLVED ONLY IN A MULTILATERAL SETTING IN WHICH
SUBSTANTIALLY ALL OF THE ARAB NATIONS WERE REPRESENTED.
THUS SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY CANNOT BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.
NOR WILL IT BE POSSIBLE ANY LONGER TO PREVENT THE SOVIET
UNION FROM EXERTING ITS INFLUENCE ON THE NEGOTIATIONS,
EITHER IN ITS CAPACITY AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE OR SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS A SUPERPOWER WITH
POWERFUL NAVAL UNITS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND CLOSE
POLITICAL AND MILITARY RELATIONS WITH CERTAIN KEY ARAB
STATES, INCLUDING SYRIA, IRAQ AND, FROM TIME TO TIME,
EGYPT.

"WE FACE, THEREFORE, THE CRITICAL TEST AS TO
WHETHER DETENTE (UNDERLINED) HAS ANY SERIOUS CONTENT OR
IS MERELY A PIOUS ABSTRACTION. WILL IT CONTINUE AS IT
HAS UP TO NOW TO ENCOURAGE THE ARAB NATIONS TO MORE AND
MORE EXORBITANT DEMANDS? WILL IT CONTINUE, AS IT HAS

RECENTLY BEEN DOING, TO SUPPORT THE CREATUMN OF A SECULAR
PALESTINIAN STATE TO EMBRACE THE AREA OF ISRAEL AS WELL
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AS THE WEST BANK IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE SECURITY
COUNCIL RESOLUTION FOR WHICH THE SOVIET UNION VOTED IN
NOVEMBER 1967--A RESOLUTION THAT CLEARLY CALLS FOR THE
CONTINUANCE OF ISRAEL AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION. OR, WILL
IT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, TRY SERIOUS-
LY TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM
WITHIN THE FOUR WALLS OF THAT RESOLUTION AND COOPERATE IN
TRYING TO DEFINE 'SECURE BOUNDARIES.' WILL IT--IN OTHER

WORDS--USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE ARAB GOVERNMENTS ON THE
SIDE OF MODERATION?

"THAT WILL BE THE TEST, IN MY VIEW, OF REAL SOVIET
INTENTIONS AS WELL AS OF THE ASTUTENESS OF MY OWN GOVERN-
MENT'S DIPLOMACY. I SEE LITTLE POSSIBILITY THAT THE
ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT A CONSIDER-
ABLE MEASURE OF AGREEMENT AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6146

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SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST, AND PARTICULARLY AMERICA.

"ONE SHOULD RECALL THAT AT THE TIME OF A SUMMIT
CONFERENCE IN MAY 1972, MR. BREZHNEV AND PRESIDENT NIXON
ISSUED A STATEMENT OF BASIC PRINCIPLES TO GOVERN THE
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION
AND, AT THE TIME OF MR. BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO THE UNITED
STATES THE FOLLOWING YEAR, THEY SIGNED AN AGREEMENT FOR
THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR. THE MAIN THRUST OF THE
BASIC PRINCIPLES WAS 'TO PREVENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF
SITUATIONS THAT MIGHT RESULT IN A DANGEROUS EXACERBATION'
OF RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. UNDER THE
AGREEMENT BOTH PARTIES DECLARED THAT THEY WOULD MAKE NO
CLAIMS FOR THEMSELVES OR RECOGNIZE THE CLAIMS OF OTHERS

'TO ANY SPECIAL RIGHTS AND ADVANTAGES IN WORLD AFFAIRS' SINCE THEY RECOGNIZED 'THE SOVEREIGN EQUALITY OF ALL STATES,' AND THEY ACCEPTED THE RESPONSIBILITY 'TO DO EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER SO THAT CONFLICTS OR SITUATIONS WOULD NOT ARISE THAT WOULD SERVE TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL TENSION.'

"THESE WERE THE SOLEMN UNDERTAKINGS THEN PROMULGATED. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE PARTIES WERE BOTH THINKING PRIMARILY IN TERMS OF THE MIDDLE EAST. NOW WE UNCLASSIFIED

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HAVE COME TO A POINT WHERE THOSE PRINCIPLES MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO EFFECTIVE ACTION OR WE SHALL PROBABLY FACE A WAR THAT COULD EASILY PRECIPITATE THE MOST DANGEROUS EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION. THUS THE TIME HAS NOW COME WHEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVERSE ITS POLICY OF TRYING TO EXCLUDE THE SOVIET UNION FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE SEEK TO ENGAGE THEM FULLY IN A COMMON EFFORT TO SHAPE AND GUARANTEE AN ENDURING SETTLEMENT.

"IN MAKING SUCH A MOVE THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT ACT ALONE BUT IN CONCERT WITH ITS FRIENDS AND ALLIES, WITH THE OTHER GREAT NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE AND VERY SPECIFICALLY WITH GREAT BRITAIN. I KNOW THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR ITS DETERMINATION TO SUPPORT THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND HAS DONE EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO HELP BRING ABOUT A FAIR SETTLEMENT. ON THESE PERILOUS MATTERS WE MUST WORK CLOSELY TOGETHER.

"TODAY THE MIDDLE EAST IS RAPIDLY BECOMING A HUGE ARSENAL. WITH UNLIMITED FUNDS AT THEIR DISPOSAL THE

MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES ARE ENGAGED IN FRANTIC PROGRAMS TO BUILD UP HUGE MILITARY MACHINES, WHILE THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES--WITH THE EXCEPTION OF JAPAN--ARE VYING WITH ONE ANOTHER TO SELL ARMS TO THE REGION, JUST AS THE SOVIET UNION IS ARMING SYRIA FOR ITS OWN STRATEGIC PURPOSES. YET IF ONE LOOKS FAR ENOUGH INTO THE FUTURE IT IS HARD TO ENVISAGE AN ARMS RACE OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT WILL NOT LEAD SOME NATION SOMEWHERE DOWN THE LINE TO USE THE WEAPONS IT HAS PROCURED.

"IT SEEMS TO ME LIKELY THAT, IF THE MOMENTUM OF NEGOTIATIONS CANNOT BE REGAINED AND THE SITUATION CONTINUES TO FESTER, THERE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE WAR WITHIN THE NEXT SIX TO NINE MONTHS. ISRAEL IS SCARCELY IN A POSITION TO SIT BY WHILE ENORMOUS STOCKS OF ARMS ARE ACCUMULATED BY THE FRONTLINE ARAB STATES. AT THE MOMENT THE ISREALIS ARE PROBABLY ADEQUATELY SUPPLIED, AT LEAST FOR A CONFLICT WITH SYRIA, BUT THEY CAN NEVER MOBILIZE THE WEALTH REQUIRED TO MATCH PROJECTED ARAB EX-

PENDITURES FOR ARMAMENT OVER THE MONTHS AHEAD AND THEY
ARE ACUTELY AWARE THAT THE ISRAELIS NUMBER ONLY TWO AND
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NOTE BY OC/T: SECTION 02 OF 03 LONDON 15674; (#) OMISSION
LAST LINE. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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ARABS. THUS, THOUGH AN ISRAELI PREEMPTIVE STRIKE AGAINST
SYRIA COULD CERTAINLY DO NO MORE THAN BUY TIME, IT SHOULD
NOT BE RULED OUT AS A POSSIBILITY.

"WHAT WOULD BE THE POSITION OF YOUR GOVERNMENT OR
MINE IN THE EVENT OF RENEWED HOSTILITIES? IMMEDIATELY
THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER OIL EMBARGO--PERHAPS EVEN MORE
SEVERE THAN THE LAST SINCE THE ARAB NATIONS HAVE LEARNED
THE EFFICACY OF THE OIL WEAPON. ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL
RECENT INITIATIVES HAS BEEN THE CREATION OF A SCHEME FOR

SHARING THE BURDEN OF ANOTHER OIL DEFICIT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY, THAT SHOULD MAKE EASIER THE MAINTENANCE OF A COMMON POSITION ON THE PART OF OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

"DURING THE PAST YEAR IT SOMETIMES SEEMED THAT MY GOVERNMENT WAS NOT SUFFICIENTLY SENSITIVE TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE OBJECTIVE SITUATION IN WHICH AMERICA FOUND ITSELF AS A MAJOR DOMESTIC OIL PRODUCER AS CONTRASTED WITH THE SITUATION OF THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE, INCLUDING GREAT BRITAIN, THAT DID NOT YET HAVE INDIGENOUS OIL RESOURCES. BUT IN FACING A COMMON PROBLEM OF SUCH TRANSCENDENT IMPORTANCE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE DO NOT PERMIT SUCH DIFFERENCES IN ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY

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TO DIVIDE US.

"TODAY THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT THREATENS NOT ONLY THE SOLIDARITY OF THE WEST BUT THE PEACE OF THE WORLD, WHILE VAULTING OIL PRICES CREATE OMINOUS STRAINS AND TENSIONS IN THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL STRUCTURE ON WHICH OUR STRENGTH AND WELL-BEING DEPEND. THE PROBLEMS WE FACE ARE THUS OF WARTIME INTENSITY AND COMPLEXITY AND WE SHOULD APPROACH THE SOLUTION OF THOSE PROBLEMS WITH THE SAME CALM STRENGTH AND COMMON PURPOSE WITH WHICH WE TOGETHER SAVED CIVILIZATION THREE DECADES AGO - THE STRENGTH AND COMMON PURPOSE FOUND A FOCUS AND SYMBOL IN WINSTON CHURCHILL, WHOM WE HONOR HERE TONIGHT."

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